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ABSTRACT

Lessons learned in the development and implementation of an English language training (ELT) project for Indonesian Civil Service workers are discussed. The project, designed to focus on development of English communication skills, was undertaken in cooperation with the state administration agency. Issues and difficulties discussed include: bureaucratic inconsistencies; the role of the advisory agency; agencies' coordination of efforts; Indonesia attitudes toward language at the personal, institutional, and national levels; differing expectations; and communication and planning styles. Through anecdotal discussion of a number of specific events, developments, and comments, the difficulty of reconciling good intentions with frustrations and disappointments is examined. (MSE)

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Warm feelings, Chill thoughts: negotiating the implementation of an ODA ELT project with the Indonesian Civil Service

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LAN-ODA-BC English Communication Skills for the Civil Service Project
Jakarta

From the perspective of project implementers working for the British Council, the question arises: What is the outsider's role when it is realised that the parent institution to the project has said "Yes" to an idea, a project design and an implementation plan but does not have the means or mechanisms to make it work? The question will not be satisfactorily answered. However, this paper will examine the process of discovering how to ask that question, to whom and when, as this is the key to the survival of any project struggling to keep to timed objectives and agreed staffing levels, to keep open effective lines of communication, to analyse what is happening and ask the right people for help.

The paper, by using a number of 'scenes from a project', will explore the following themes: warm feelings generated in institutional or classroom based development grow tepid when transferred to a national implementational level; chill thoughts multiply as gaps widen between plan and action, vision and reality; warm feelings are essential for the health of current project work and the future sustainability or institutionalisation of its products and services.

INTRODUCTION
Coping with ambiguity and making a virtue of it

This paper, like many papers that start out in the minds of writers not knowing where they will end up, begins with a paradox. It is this : an ELT project, officially entitled English Communication Skills for the Civil Service (ECSCS) has been approved for Indonesian Government counterpart funding by a national planning board (BAPPENAS) that does not officially recognise the right of the civil service to set up and fund its own language training other than in universities. The project operates in the context of a government that places the responsibility for language training not in the hands of government education and training centres but with universities and other educational institutions. At the core of the project is LAN - the National Agency for State Administration. The primary aim of the ECSCS Project is to

> "establish a core national network of guaranteed quality language training providers to the Indonesian Civil Service, accessible through and monitored by LAN".

This aim involves the establishment of LAN Language Centres, in fact five, by the end of the three year project. However, LAN is an Agency answering directly to the Minister of Administrative Reform and the President, it is not a ministry , it does not have an implementing role. Its role is to guide and coordinate Human Resource Development (HRD) training in the civil service. It establishes guidelines, sets standards, advises, selectively trains, monitors. It is a highly ambiguous agency. It appears to have power, and yet it has no power.

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To take the paradox further into the network of language training providers mentioned in the project aims: we support centres which do not officially exist in the institutional structure of the parent organisation; we help develop teachers who cannot establish a career path because language training is not officially part of the institution's activities, we help improve the quality of programmes which are not part of the officially funded and approved list of courses for the parent institutions; we lobby, often successfully, for payments for teachers that are in excess of government guidelines.

This kind of paradox is complex and ubiquitous in the stakeholder relationships of many civil service based projects. We apparently break the rules, many of the places we work in do not officially exist, and yet stakeholders in the project mainly agree that it is innovative, cost effective, and successful, particularly in the way it builds on the foundations and successes of previous projects.

Where are we going right?

THE MAIN PROJECT PARTNER: LAN
The ambiguity thickens

These twin desires to demonstrate good practise in the management of language training and be a source of advice on the same, is a central plank of a project which has been jointly negotiated and agreed by its funders (ODA and LAN) and joint implementers (the British Council and LAN) i.e., that LAN's national advisory role on language training can only be justified and sensible if it can maintain its own centres of excellence with good facilities, resources, programmes and teaching/training expertise. In short, to promote good ELT management systems by example.

However, there is tension at the heart of the project between the place of and official support for good practice in a mainly advisory agency, and the feasibility of LAN's claim to be a respected source of guidelines, professional information and advice if it cannot demonstrate that it is practising what it preaches. This tension is exacerbated by scarce human, material and financial resources which put the successful fulfillment of either of those roles under threat. These limitations are characterised by understaffing, the 'leakage' of senior experienced and/or qualified staff to more lucrative or higher status LAN operations, inaccessible funding and opaque financial systems. Taking the wider view, these limitations are made more serious by weak links between LAN and other government agencies involved in training civil servants, as well as the academic sector.

LAN-British Council-ODA: partner, managing agent and donor
Reconciling the eternal triangle

The twin desires of promoting as well as demonstrating good practice described in the previous section have affected BC-LAN relationships since ELT project work began in 1987. This is from a paper by a previous LAN ELT Adviser (1987-1994) at the 1993 Language in Development Conference in Bangkok:

> "from the very start the local project manager (BC ELO) look a wide and long-term view of LAN's national standard setting and coordinating potential, whereas LAN itself seemed to see the project ... in terms of the consultant's setting up and running a language unit."

This is from a briefing paper to British Council staff in the second month of the three year followup project that started in April 1994:

> ".....the concept (of 'centre of excellence') is particularly relevant when applied to the LAN centres which in the life of the project must both prove their worth as good quality language centres and take on an advisory role in the regions. They cannot claim to do the latter without doing the former.....one weakness is time: the parallel roles of being a centre of excellence and acting as regional advisers may not be successful."

Project partners, their relationship mediated and ratified by ODA, don't seem to be able to agree. For seven years LAN and the BC employed an adviser who had arrived expecting to exploit LAN's "national standard setting and coordinating potential" but found himself setting up courses and teaching on them. For the next three years we seem doomed to employ many more advisers who are expecting to improve quality at programme and institution level but find themselves under pressure from LAN to get out and consult nationally with the wider Civil Service. Is this simply a case of poorly negotiated, ventriloquised project design? Or even more crudely of a BC project management lagging behind LAN's ambitious, expansionist and arguably unrealistic aims: first to set up language units and then to go out and preach to others on how to do it? We think not.

For a more sophisticated interpretation, it is necessary to look further into the place of foreign language skills in Indonesian society particularly in the context of the Civil Service. To do this we will look at the three levels at which our project work interacts with Indonesian attitudes to learning English : the personal, the institutional and the national. After that we will consider the status of ELT in development projects at the same three levels.

Indonesian attitudes to ELT

Personal level

At the personal level, society has a great desire for English. English is 'needed' and those who are proficient may find themselves on a fast track to the top of public or private sector institutions, especially if overseas training opportunities are involved. Attendance at private language schools is high. Because they have often studied or worked overseas, some members of elite groups have advanced and sophisticated language skills, although a sizeable proportion do not. Testing of civil servants routinely shows that roughly 80% of all groups, however high their status, are at elementary levels of English proficiency. Many in the elite see it as the individual's own responsibility to acquire language skills: "I did it without anyone's help, why shouldn't everyone else?" is a common response among such senior people.

They do not recognise that increasingly, with Indonesia's success at mass education, more and more people are graduating from schools and universities than in the past, when only a handful of the best and brightest made it to the top. Since English is a scarce resource in the civil service it is a source of power. Since power is perceived to be finite (Anderson, 1972), and in the absence of high level government policy, some sections of the elite have pulled up the drawbridge behind them.

In not being part of technical or scientific fields, English teachers tend to have low status. The quality of

teacher training and consequently teaching ability is poor. They are badly paid, necessitating a kind of job 'polygamy' between the public and private sectors. Poorly paid teachers working for the civil service can be mistrusted by the parent institution or even envied by non-teaching colleagues, despite not having access to other kinds of income other than their basic salary. Systems of remuneration for teaching tend to be more transparent and overseas training opportunities in ELT tend to be more prevalent because of bilateral aid projects such as the ECSCS project.

On the positive side, dynamic teachers can thrive in this atmosphere because they are not always closely monitored and are able to develop programmes in relative freedom. The entrepreneurial teacher/manager is a strong feature of this project's language centre network.

Institutional level

At the institutional level, society has a great desire for English. English is 'needed' although that need is not always clearly articulated or realistic. Some private institutions invest a great deal in their language programmes. In the state sector there is a need for both pre-departure preparation and job-related training. Unfortunately the civil service is under pressure. With four million members it is overstaffed and yet the numbers of properly placed, qualified and experienced staff are few. Promising graduates are now more likely to go into the private sector than in the past.

Furthermore, although current national planning objectives put HRD at the top of the agenda, in reality the government training centres where ELT either takes place or is commissioned are, with a few exceptions, poorly staffed and motivated. They are rarely the centre of policy making or even planning, but tend to be rather peripheral to the main activities of most agencies.

The education and training centres (Pusdiklats) can be used by upwardly mobile staff as a stepping stone to better things. They are also used to dump unwanted and poorly performing staff from other parts of the organisation. They do not have access to huge amounts of projectised funds, nor do they have a clear idea of how to integrate ELT with other priorities and demands on training funds. Of the training funds they do bid for and receive, large proportions go on income distribution to the detriment of the quality and reputation of the programmes.

A final handicap to government training centres being able to properly plan and implement (or arrange the commissioning of) language training is that we have repeatedly been told that ELT activity cannot be stated explicitly in the 'Blue Book': the National Planning Agency's record of approved government funding. Our efforts to confirm this officially with BAPPENAS have so far met with a resounding silence. Since language training is officially the preserve of universities and other academic institutions, the teaching of English in the civil service must be an open secret, euphemistically disguised in proposals and plans as "staff training" or "technical skills".

This lack of official recognition for language training in non-academic institutions has several major consequences:

- it is difficult to get institutional status for language centres in the civil service and thus status and a career path for its teachers
- national agencies such as LAN and BAPPENAS are in a difficult position. BAPPENAS in particular has agreed a project called ECSCS but at the same time discourages or refuses proposals from

> government departments that explicitly name language training
> ironically, the lack of official recognition has become a strength in many of the centres this project works with. They have been left alone to quietly do a good job and provide a quality and cost-effective service to clients both inside and outside the civil service.

Contributing to the bad reputation of ELT in some parts of the civil service is that in the past English courses were not run to any agreed standards and the result was a wide variation in implementation, from well planned programmes in some ministries to the opposite. Often funds for ELT were paid to unqualified people, courses were run by anyone who could speak English in the office, usually ending after a short period when no one showed up for classes.

Finally, at the institutional level there are unrealistic expectations concerning ELT, both from the Indonesian and the donor sides. Little time is allocated to it when there are programmes, and many failed experiments in language learning tend to make people reluctant to try again.

National level

At the national level there is no great desire for English. This silence at the highest levels comes as a surprise to foreign project implementers who are for example familiar with reports of low take-up on overseas training programmes due to weak language skills. There is no central place to go for information on ELT in the country although English is the first foreign language in the education system.

Occasionally reference to English is made by a member of the political or academic elite and gets into the news; for example the current push by the Minister of Education to have all English names of businesses and foreign companies Indonesianized, or the announcement by a representative of the Ministry of Public Works that Indonesian consultants were handicapped by their poor English (Jakarta Post, 16 April 1992).

There is of course a general nodding of heads in agreement when the importance of English for globalization is mentioned, but we suspect that this silence at the highest levels is connected to Indonesia's regard for Bahasa Indonesia as a strong binding force for national unity and its belief in unity and harmony as a prerequisite for development. Although sections of the political elite use English very effectively, the higher up you go the less likely you are to hear English used in public. It was a shock to hear President Soeharto speak 'off the cuff' at last year's APEC press conference for the world's press, broadcast live on national TV. It was even more of a shock that at one point he used English: "I'm sorry, what was the first question?"

In this patrimonial style of leadership used by the president, and incidentally emulated by many others in leadership positions, the absence of high level comments or decrees on the place of English means that there are no nationally applied initiatives aimed at mobilising a change in civil service policy and societal behaviour, as in for example the family planning and literacy campaigns. Consequently the initiatives that have occurred are isolated, limited in effect and difficult to sustain since they are tied to a single champion who takes his power culture along with him when he changes jobs, leaving the 'orphaned' system behind to struggle along in the weaker organisational culture or even with hostility from the new manager. At best initiatives are maintained using vertical departmental power lines such as language training policy implemented over many years in some individual ministries.

The much rarer horizontal links across several departments are more vulnerable to decay. A good example of this is the Overseas Training Office of BAPPENAS's language training 'pipeline', set up by a 'champion' who

then moved into a ministerial post and incidentally instigated a communication skills project in that ministry also. The future of the generally well regarded and effective OTO-BAPPENAS system is unfortunately now unclear.

A national professional association of English teachers has grown out of a regional consortium of faculties and departments of English. This association, TEFLIN, has run two national conferences a year until recently, when it moved to have regional activities as well as one conference. It also publishes a journal and has recently decided to have individual as well as institutional memberships.

Status of ELT in Development Projects

Personal level

The individual in most development projects usually sees ELT arrangements as a necessary evil or is even harmed by them. Candidates for short-term overseas training usually have no support and are given little, if any, ELT prior to departure. Candidates for overseas academic training often see the long period of ELT and the hurdle of the tests as a heavy burden-if they fail and do not go abroad, they will lose face, status and possibly their position in their organization. Successful individuals often return from abroad to find that they are in demand by virtue of their English (although at times woefully under-utilized in their professional fields).

Individual English teachers who have benefitted from donor-sponsored teacher training activities, whether in Indonesia or abroad, have a personal development interest in further professional activities. Unfortunately, it is a common problem in non-university agencies within the civil service to find mismatches between job tasks and professional training. We often see trained English teachers assigned to non-teaching jobs, while engineers or lawyers in technical ministries are assigned to become English teachers by virtue of their English ability.

Many individual project managers and senior officials, both Indonesian and donor, think that ELT is not a priority when compared to the technical aims the project has to achieve. Planning, particularly for short-term training is not done far enough ahead because it is individually and not institutionally instigated. We have known project managers who think that it is perfectly adequate to use wives, volunteers and passing tourists to teach English to their staff. So, a lack of adequate information and awareness about ELT at the individual managerial level is a major problem.

Institutional level

At an institutional level there have been many initiatives to develop ELT capacity within universities and government training centres. Often support for a language centre will come from more than one donor concurrently, or a new project will come into a centre with little knowledge of previous projects. Only the ghosts of these projects remain, in the centre book collection or in the country where staff were trained. Over the past few years, however, there has been a concerted effort for donors to cooperate on developing regional capability and resources in language centres and to avoid starting with a clean slate as though nothing had been there before. Coordination meetings, networks, workshops, teacher training, and other (often donor) initiatives have seen participation by a wide range of local language centres.

Efforts to institutionalize language teaching within ministries has met with varying degrees of success.

Because the funding for ELT is so often project-related, language centres within the ministry training centre may not be utilized. Development projects can and do pay for training wherever they want to, and will only use the ministry training centre's language program if it suits their needs. This is another reflection of the weak communication links within many ministries. Project ELT focuses on pre-departure ELT for counterparts or target participants in technical projects.

Some long-running overseas training projects within ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, or the Agency for Technology Research and Application have longstanding relationships with private language training providers for pre-departure ELT. Other language centres within ministries and universities depend on development projects to provide funding for the steady stream of courses that any language program requires in order to survive and thrive because they get very little institutional funding to run their own courses.

National level

Although there is no national policy on English for the Indonesian civil service, nor any standards from the Ministry of Education other than secondary school curricula, some efforts are being made through a variety of development projects to institute standards and procedures at a national level. One of the main areas of concern is overseas training, with the now infamous Sinclair-Webb report in the mid-1980's reporting that the country was unable to take up approximately 60% of overseas training opportunities. This led to the establishment of the Overseas Training Office in the National Planning Agency which had as one of its functions the establishment of standards for a pipeline of training leading up to overseas training and funded at the lower level by the Indonesian government and at the upper levels by donors. This has had some impact at the national level, mainly in that everyone now is aware of certain TOEFL cut-offs. It has had some effect on planning within ministries, although fewer have actually funded and implemented their own lower level 'pipelines' of language training than was hoped. Most continue to plan only when the overseas offers are clearly available, rather than readying a group of people in anticipation of opportunities.

At approximately the same time the LAN project began, with a national brief to improve the ability of the civil service to provide language training and advice. Establishment of a language centre in LAN and expansion to two regional centres was intended to enable LAN to help other ministries develop their own national policies and programs sectorally. This is one place where our project fits in - trying to build on this beginning.

Ministry of Education aid projects on a national level have included a large secondary school teacher upgrading project (PKG) and support for the Open University English language program with an outgrowth of this being a set of standardised, secure, National Exams available to the public on a regular basis. A major need is for upgrading of English teacher preparation in government teacher training institutes and faculties.

And at the national policy level donor countries have decided that ELT is not a priority. ODA and the British Council have told both Indonesian and British grant applicants this in writing. Fulbright programs are open to ELT applicants in only a few remote provinces. As a result we have found many cases of ELT instructors wanting overseas training who have been forced to study public administration, English literature, library science, and even regional planning.

We will now continue to keep that three level model in mind while looking at our own experiences as project implementers in a number of state sector institutions.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF GOOD PRACTICE
Warm feelings multiply

For seven years the British Council Projects Unit worked at the personal and institutional development levels. Lack of national initiatives and horizontal cooperation across departments in the civil service were less inhibiting to our work. At the personal level, language centre staff increased the number and quality of programmes taught, resources used and staff developed. At the institutional level, implementers became more informed, less naive about the mechanisms of both university and non-university language centre management. Indonesian managers networked and began to come up with shared practical and workable systems for developing their centres. Everyone simply became much better at knowing what strategies for change would work, at finding out what their parent institutions and other clients really needed and then giving it to them. The difference in professional maturity, awareness of place, pre-post orientation and management support for a British Council teacher specialist going into a new project in 1994 compared to 1988 was immense.

Given some of the factors mentioned earlier that mitigate against the institutionalization and growth of language centres in the state sector, it could be said that we sneaked into successful language centre development through the back door. We had done it without anyone really important at the national level knowing that we were there, so that by 1994 were working with a large number of centres that were both sustainable and growing.

The following positive features of project work are the source of our warm feelings:

Innovative project design - the host institution is a 'partner in development', both sides have the freedom to be creative and process the project's objectives according to local conditions

Continuity - we have a detailed project history which helps us build on earlier projects in a timely fashion using a wide range of local expertise and consultants; experience is recycled from mature to new projects; there has also been continuity of ODA funded staff who have strong professional ties with Indonesia and value teamwork

Collaborative self-evaluation - this process is integral to the project and not simply tacked on or carried out by external 'experts'; people are looking carefully at their own problems and finding ways to solve them

Intensity - the project has always provided practical and intensive input for the host institution with full-time **teacher** specialists

Professional development focus - teachers are encouraged to become the best they possibly can in the circumstances in which they work; in the life of a project a teacher can become a trainer and then a local consultant to the network

Overseas training - this has been used generously to answer both institutional and personal needs; it has resulted in a network of skilled, highly trained and respected ELT professionals

The British Council link - the managing agent has a long history of support and a large number of

contacts going back over time and spread throughout the country; this has made it easier for projects to begin and get on the right track.

Although there are many references above to 'the network', in itself it is more fragile. The professional linkages are strong, but this projects unit has been lucky to have generous operational budgets. Central government, external donor or institutional funding is needed to hold a network operating over such a large geographical area together. This makes it vulnerable to decay.

So, on the whole the warm feelings generated by the work described above are simply another way of saying that they are concerned with aspects which are relatively sustainable. These sustainability indicators, as they are termed by the World Bank (World Bank, 1990), help to identify possible areas where we may be able to see "the continuation of benefits beyond the completion of initial investment in an institution".

During this last year as the project has been struggling to keep to timed objectives and agreed staffing and funding levels, chill thoughts have multiplied as implementers have come to 'know' what they would rather not 'know': very little of the work being carried out is sustainable in ways the World Bank would recognise. We console ourselves with the thought that any investment in human resources is never completely lost. It is to a description and analysis of these chill thoughts that we now turn.

WORKING AT NATIONAL LEVELS
The seduction of power and colluding in success

Life for LAN and the British Council changed radically in April 1994 with the addition of a third national level of operations. Institutional development and network maintenance work was to continue by being transferred into LAN's projectised and then hopefully its routine operations. Further, LAN's role as a source of professional information and advice to state sector language training units and all government agencies seeking advice on ELT was to be consolidated. All signatories of the MOU were very happy with this plan. LAN could enhance its reputation and widen its constituency; the British Council could continue to manage and benefit from ODA work as well as move into top levels of government; ODA could attempt the sustainability of a good training model in a government agency with which it already had strong historical links at relatively little cost.

What actually happened must be seen in the context of pressure from within the minds of all stakeholders for success; nobody at project startup (as a designer or funder) or in the future (as an implementer or top management sponsor) wants to be associated with failure. Professional and political reputations are at stake; there is the economic effect of success and therefore continued employment for those whose primary income is from the project; there is a tendency for implementers to avoid discussing project difficulties with their bosses; leaders have a tendency to disassociate themselves from projects that cannot prove themselves worthy of patronage; everyone has an ego.

Project implementers from the British Council and LAN were required to move up to higher levels of status and power than they were used to. The sense of naivete described earlier returned. We believed in the feasibility of working at the institutional level, but could we implement this new rather tiny project in a national agency, tap into the power structure, find out what was needed, match that with what LAN was

willing to provide in the way of tangible support, build horizontal linkages of similar trust and support with the other big government stakeholders to the project: the Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Secretariat? Would we ever be able to write short, simple sentences again?

The British Council team were perturbed to find that their middle management counterparts in these key institutions also seemed naive. It was not clear to them how they should access human and material resources, they did not use any recognisable or consistent professional protocol with new contacts in other institutions. They were learning how to second ELT professionals into the project, how to set up finance systems, to propose and account for funding, who to liaise with about integrating project activity with other LAN based training programmes. Even more worrying, their bosses at the top levels did not seem to know either. Or if they did know they weren't telling. All we knew was that power is rarely delegated and in Indonesia has been concentrated at the cost of open communication (Emmerson, 1978).We had reached the policy making levels of government but were failing to work out how policy was actually formulated and how power was used to implement it.

Miscommunications and assumptions on both sides have caused problems in the first year of the project, despite what was considered to be an ideal starting point with shared experiences and office space for a year prior to project startup.

To illustrate some of the issues causing both positive and negative feelings in this project, given below are several short scenes, each one linked to four recurring areas of concern. The quality of communication is the common thread throughout.

Area One: Designing the project and the project framework

Scene: The Hotel Room Several months before the target startup date ODA commissioned a highly experienced British Council consultant to spend two weeks designing the project. He had in fact been the project manager of the previous seven years of ELT project work in Indonesia. He used previous project documentation and a LAN ideas paper produced six months previously by its ELT adviser in consultation with his LAN counterpart and endorsed by LAN top management. For his human resources he relied on LAN's ELT adviser, the main implementing counterpart in LAN and the British Council coordinator of the Institutional Level Project who was going to take over coordination of the new project. His base for the two weeks was a hotel room high up over the city, overlooking the House of Representatives building.

Several times his human resources congregated in the hotel room to give factual input and comment on the feasibility of the design. Finally, in draft, most of the papers that would eventually become the MOU were negotiated with LAN's top management. These included two vital finance Appendices from which both BC and LAN funding would be planned for the next three years.

To design something that had not been done before in LAN you need minds that are creative and realistic, project experienced people that are not afraid to have strong opinions on what is feasible and what needs to be focused on, particularly people who can accurately predict the roles and attitudes of major stakeholders to the project in the future. Were those people in the hotel room? The BC representatives knew a lot about implementation at the institutional level, a lot of effort went into discussing feasibility given the provision of agreed human and material resources on both sides. Not much effort went into discussing whether each side could actually provide those resources both when, and in the quantities agreed. Since the parameters of ODA funding and BC skills were fairly well known, it was the national policy interests of LAN and its capability to

deliver political will and support to turn the policy into action that was most questionable. Who knew about this and who would tell us?

In a society where authority is so rarely delegated information flow from top to bottom is often blocked. Thus for example knowledge about how projects are set up and run is not available to people who have not done it before. Our counterparts at the implementation level had not done it before. Leaders at any level in the hierarchy are often valued as leaders more for personality than performance. In general, "the civil service are expected to endorse and implement the executive's policies, not share in the formulation of those policies". (Schwarz, 1994). In general, ELT practitioners are not experienced in project management work. To compound this the Indonesian ELT trained counterparts in the design process were also civil servants, they had been inducted into a organisation that values control and is uneasy with initiative. A great deal of trust needs to be present before individuals will speak their minds. The project design process had a number of strong, positive features. We all hate that phrase, "With the benefit of hindsight", but perhaps these strong features blurred our view of the design's weak link which was that the Indonesian stakeholder perspective was incomplete.

Area Two. Negotiating the budget with central authorities (BAPPENAS and the Budget Directorate of the Ministry of Finance)

Scene: The Financial Plan On a Tuesday morning near the end of Year 1 of the project all project personnel are called to an urgent meeting and asked to prepare a plan for the next fiscal year by the next day. A few months later, all project personnel are called and asked to write out a justification for their planned activities to cover the whole year. Why? The budget office of the Ministry of Finance and BAPPENAS want more detail before approving the matching funding agreed under the MOU. This demand runs counter to the process based heart of consultancy work in the project which is to respond to requests. How can a detailed travel plan be made in advance for this kind of work that will satisfy the Ministry of Finance?

Scene: Income Distribution Indonesian project counterparts are constantly concerned with money (who isn't) and the administration staff of the centre are jealous of the large amounts of money that teaching staff get. The teaching staff often work until late in the evening teaching, partly because they receive no monthly honoraria for their work as project counterparts (and we all know that civil service salaries are too low). Support staff ask for money whenever asked to do tasks such as preparing course certificates, making travel arrangements, etc. There is a feeling that the top managers are taking large amounts of money from the office for their personal use.

In the second year of the project the negotiations with BAPPENAS continue to exclude honoraria for project personnel in the annual plan. Yet the honoraria are being paid. Now at least the honoraria are being paid in a less hidden form, being included in the project implementation document which is internal to LAN, but not appearing in the overall project Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Unfortunately such honoraria are not paid at all to personnel in other participating centres outside Jakarta, leading to more frustration and jealousy.

Most projects in the country have monthly stipends for project counterparts and support staff. That is why people like to work on projects. A secretary can earn as much as she could in the private sector if she is on a project. Professional staff can also be expected to spend their allotted time (full or part-time) on the project when the remuneration is clear.

In this project, at the project design stage the Indonesian counterpart funding budget was allocated without

including honoraria for project staff. When the omission was noted by the project design team, the idea was not taken up by the Indonesians. Is this naivete on the part of the project designers? Is it deliberate ignoring of the obvious? There are other projects both foreign and domestic under LAN. Surely there must have been some knowledge of procedures in project design. Perhaps the wrong people saw the draft project framework. Unofficial payments worry us, although they occur on both sides of the project, both the Indonesian and the British Council. It is not a good advertisement for good management systems when, for instance, language centre staff have to collude in fictional travel times in order to allow extra payments (which all sides agree are justifiable) to support staff.

Area Three. Establishing the team of senior counterparts
Scene: Obtaining Staff When it became obvious that LAN did not have enough experienced staff to be senior counterparts for the project, alternatives began to be discussed. One was to hire more people, but it is difficult to hire senior people into the civil service. So new staff would be junior people who could be trained up to eventually become counterparts after becoming experienced teachers. Another alternative was to second senior people from other places in the civil service, a time-honored tradition in the government here and one which tied in with the project's network focus. This suggestion, however, led to resounding silence. Eventually, it was agreed that the idea of secondment could be pursued, but no one seemed quite sure how to go about it. In frustration, BC project personnel resorted to phone calls to top people (going over the heads) to find out what the procedures were. Letters of request were finally sent to several people/agencies by the Indonesian manager. Several months later the agreed secondments had not materialized. "I didn't know because I wasn't copied with the letter." "I don't think the request was sent to the right person." "Nobody told me about it." "I was waiting for someone else to follow it up."

Possibly suggesting secondments was a threat to the widely touted but not widely believed LAN status as centre of excellence. Perhaps a diverse, well-qualified Indonesian team was ironically a threat to middle management's vision of power relations in the institution. Perhaps there were differing views of the urgency of the task. How sustainable would the secondment idea be? Perhaps it is wise to consider David Hall's comment:

> "The project personnel may be in a particularly privileged position in their ability to circumvent or fast-track normal institutional procedures. Local project staff may be given a temporarily artificially high status by their association with the project. In either case, the end of the project may result in a reversion to the status quo which may be catastrophic to the sustainability of project achievements." (Hall, 1994)

Communication was another major issue. People not only did not have information, they did not actively seek it. Finally, the end justifies the means approach of going above the heads of people in the middle in order to get agreement to seek secondments was not appreciated.

Area Four. Working with major stakeholders
Scene: On the job The Ministry of Home Affairs Agency for Education and Training has arranged for the project advisor and LAN counterpart to visit a provincial local government training centre to advise them on developing their English programs. The local training centre staff are enthusiastic in welcoming the advice of the visitors, and planning sessions with the instructors, who are from the local university as well as from within the training centre, are well-received. A workshop on planning language training for the local government officials was attended by representatives of the highest levels under the Governor. The project

personnel come away feeling that the programs will run as planned and that further support would certainly be justified, even though the actual teaching skills of the local instructors were minimal. All letters back to the province were copied to the Governor and the head of the MHA Agency for Education and Training.

Yet at the central Ministry level the relationship between LAN and the Ministry of Home Affairs is somewhat problematic. LAN is seen to be taking away power and funding from the Ministry whenever it tries to enter the course implementation arena. It is tolerated as long as it is giving free information and support, but not when it begins to be seen to encroach on the territory of the Ministry's training activities. So, when LAN planned to open a branch in Medan, the local government was asked to help by providing classrooms and students. "Why should we support LAN when we could do this ourselves?" was the MHA question at central level. "Why can't we just work with the B.C.?"

Warm feelings in work with one of the major stakeholders highlight the continual tension in this project between the national level objectives of strengthening a network of independent centres and local level hands on activities seen to be useful.

CONCLUSION

Bid for empowerment

What we have put in this paper has been learnt over many years of working with different parts of the civil service: a power culture that does not easily give up its secrets and often requires the outsider to be able to interpret different kinds of silence. The little we do know never seems enough for us to feel we are optimising the way we work. In dark moments we interpret 'information-keeping' as a form of management power, where management is defined as knowing what others don't.

What we are learning to do now is share the warm feelings about small sustainable activities that can be so easily drowned in the communication of frustration, dissatisfaction and criticism; in the language of demand, request, complaint, denial.

We are challenged by the need to make power infinite, using better and more communication skills to empower all stakeholders to the project. We call this the 'indiscreet' model of project implementation: find out what is happening, analyse it, tell everyone, ask for help, recycle the information, start again.

Wish us luck.

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